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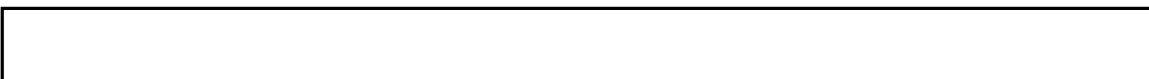
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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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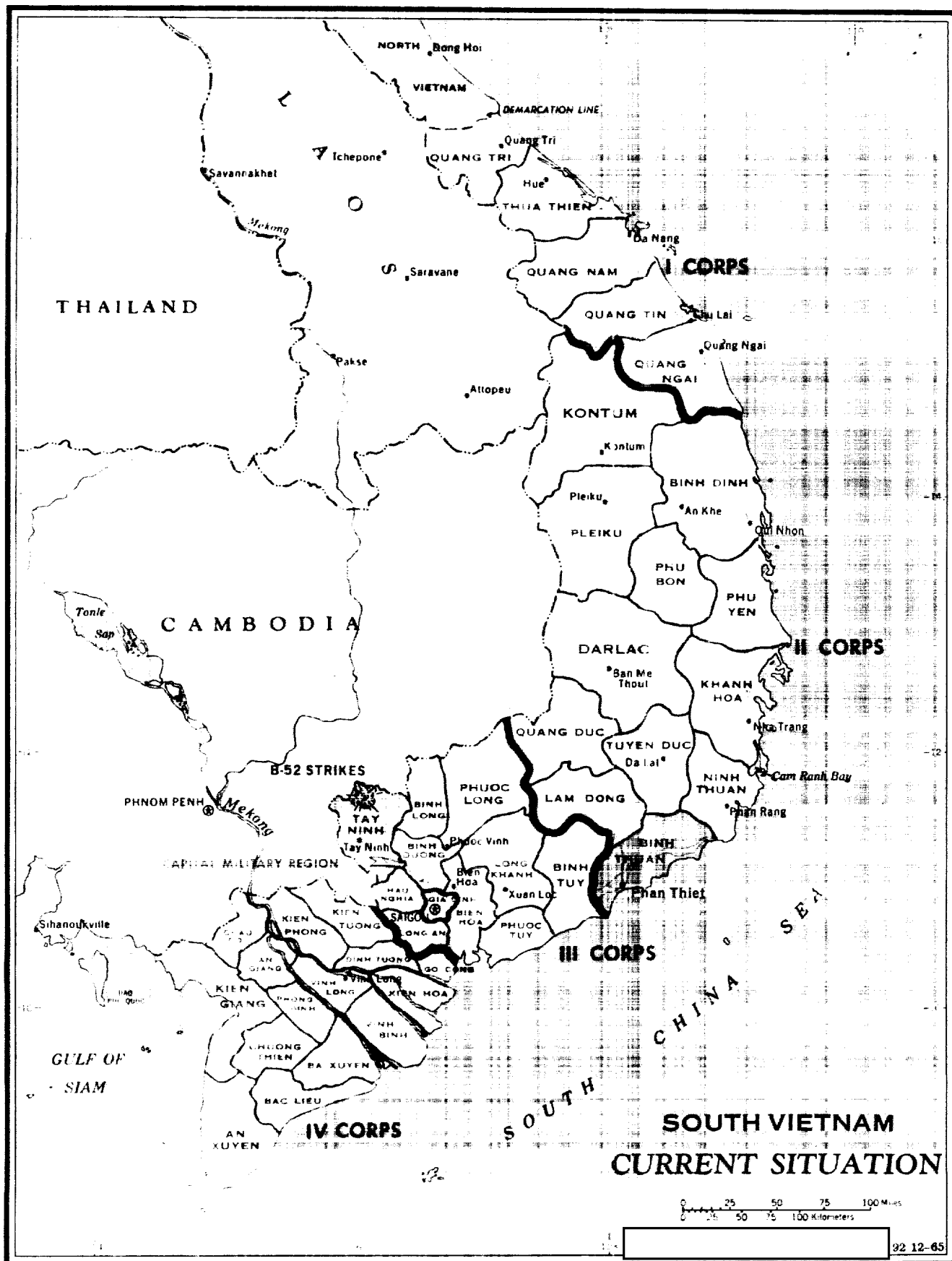
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*Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EST)

The Military Situation in South Vietnam: Two explosions set off by Viet Cong terrorists in the Saigon area during the early evening of 6 January reportedly killed one Vietnamese and wounded seven others, including three US military personnel. The one fatality and the injuries to the Americans occurred at the military entrance to Saigon's Tan Son Nhut airport. An hour later, a second explosion collapsed a police substation in the eastern part of the city and caused additional injuries to one policeman and several civilian bystanders.

In Tay Ninh Province, B-52 Stratofortresses yesterday bombed the suspected location of the Viet Cong's major command headquarters in South Vietnam for the second consecutive day. There were no plans for ground operations following either of the air strikes.

Elsewhere, two Vietnamese Popular Force platoons have repulsed an attack by an estimated company of Viet Cong near Phan Thiet, the provincial capital of Binh Thuan Province. The government lost two killed and four wounded while killing 27 Viet Cong and capturing six others.

Communist Political Developments: In the most authoritative Chinese commentary on the US peace effort to date, the Peking People's Daily on 7 January gave what appears to be China's response to the US 14-point peace proposition. Asserting that the proposition is a "gigantic fraud" and criticizing it point by point, the article appears designed to encourage Hanoi's refusal to negotiate except on Communist terms. Peking's

stand closely parallels that of Hanoi on the US peace effort, and the Chinese like the North Vietnamese underscore the necessity for a US troop withdrawal from South Vietnam as the "prerequisite" for a political settlement.

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***USSR-Vietnam:** The inclusion of the First Deputy Commander of the Soviet Strategic Rocket Forces, Col. Gen. Tolubko, in the Shelepin delegation to Hanoi may be intended to convey the suggestion that offensive missiles are slated for introduction into North Vietnam.

Moscow might hope in this way to alarm the US and thereby check further escalation of the war. Tolubko's presence, however, also raises the possibility that the Soviet Union is prepared to consider deployment of offensive missiles to the DRV even in the face of obvious risks and military limitations. The Soviet leaders might calculate that, in addition to the deterrent effect, such a step would help dramatically to strengthen their influence in Hanoi at the expense of the Chinese.

Transit rights across China would be required, unless the USSR were willing to risk a repetition of the Cuban quarantine by attempting sea movement. The Soviets probably would see a good chance that China would refuse passage, confirming Soviet claims that Moscow is willing to go to great lengths in support of North Vietnam but is hampered by Chinese obstructionism.

There are potent arguments against the conjecture that the Soviets might adopt such a course of action. Without nuclear warheads, even a large number of missiles could not inflict serious damage on South Vietnam. They would be vulnerable to attack, and the USSR could not expect them to survive for long if they became involved in an exchange.

Moscow has left the clear impression that it has a realistic appreciation of the seriousness of US commitments in Vietnam and of the risks posed by more direct Soviet involvement. The Soviet role to date has been marked by a concern with limiting the extent of Soviet assistance to the DRV and a determination to avoid direct confrontation with the US.

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A more routine explanation can be offered for the inclusion of Tolubko in Shelepin's delegation. There is clearly a place for a top Soviet military official on any high level delegation to the DRV. Last February, Air Marshal Vershinin, commander of the Soviet Air Force, accompanied Kosygin to Hanoi. Tolubko may have been selected primarily to draw special attention to the Soviet strategic rocket forces and to underscore Moscow's contention that the defense of the Communist bloc essentially depends on the USSR's power, a line aimed as much at Peking as at Washington.

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[* Because of the shortage of time for preparation of this item, the analytic interpretation presented here has been produced by the Central Intelligence Agency without the participation of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State.]

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Cuba: The current Tri-Continent Conference in Havana is shaping up as a major contest between followers of the USSR and those who favor China.

About 500 representatives of revolutionary groups from Asia, Africa, and Latin America are in Cuba for the 3-12 January meeting. A majority of them appear to favor establishment of a new tri-continental body to replace the Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Organization. The Chinese, however, are strongly resisting such an organization, in which their influence would be further reduced.

Havana appears to be trying to prevent an open dispute at the conference. As part of the Cubans' effort to appear neutral in the Sino-Soviet rift, they acceded to certain of Peking's demands--particularly in seating certain delegations favorable to China and blocking others such as the Yugoslavs.

Havana clearly hopes to use the conference to bring it recognition as a major leader of revolutionary forces. Cuban President Dorticos' opening speech was an appeal to revolutionaries to "find a common anti-imperialist language." He said that "revolutionary violence" should be used "to oppose imperialist violence."

In the past year, Cuban-Chinese relations have fallen to a new low, and Chinese actions at the conference are likely to cause a further deterioration. The Chinese have been the first to interject Sino-Soviet polemics into the proceedings. The chief Chinese delegate on 5 January derided "some people"--clearly the Soviets--for collaborating with the US "to dominate the world." More explicit denunciations may well follow.

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NOTES

Communist China - Africa: The severance of relations with Peking by the new military regimes in Dahomey and the Central African Republic (CAR) this week adds to the reverses which Communist China has sustained in Africa over the past year. Peking's formal representation there now has been reduced to 15 capitals as against 14 for the Chinese Nationalists. Col. Bokassa's regime in CAR apparently is not actively considering restoration of ties with Taipei, but Dahomey's leaders are trying to overcome resistance by some domestic elements to such action.

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